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就只是「看」
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回歸本然的一道門
A DOORWAY INTO
THE ORDINARY





攝影 Photography 林偉雄 Hung Lam

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EDITOR'S NOTE

陳旨均 Chen Zhijun

秋天的到來總是提醒我，我從未在香港見過流星。

在我居住的村子，一仰頭，盡是天。我那位鍾愛大自然的鄰居常常告訴我，秋天是看流星的好時節，碰上晴朗的夜空，流星更是多不勝數——除了我，大概全村的人都見過了。

我說我倒霉。「嘩，」她回應道，「妳從來都唔抬頭。」

給她說中了。我的確經常心不在焉；眼前的看不見，看見的盡是我想看的。

不只是我，不少人都知道自己有偏見的慣性。所以我們追求知識、努力地擴展我們的視野——看很多不同種類的書，到世界各地旅遊；學各式各樣的新玩意，認識不同的新朋友；嘗試聆聽、甚至接受他人的想法。

這些都應該有幫助。奈何事與願違：普遍所見，我們學得愈多，卻愈堅持己見。要成為一個思想開放、通情達理的人，途徑好像有點偏差了。

看著我們周圍的發生和自己的起心動念，我們到底看到了什麼？

過來人都發現，細心關注之下，生命超乎我們想像的豐富。心的本性明而覺；禪修大師不厭其煩地指出，每個人都有看清現象的能力。

禪修老師詠給·明就仁波切在《你是幸運的》一書中，鼓勵我們如實的「看」——放下判別和見解，就只是「看」。他說：「以這種方式去注意體驗時，我們就能從單純看的體驗中，區分出我們的判別和見解。」這期的雜誌節錄了他的分享。

直觀體驗的練習有助於我們了解自己，也能影響我們平常的生活態度。明就仁波切說，有覺知的時候，我們可以對習慣的想法、情緒和感官知覺保持開敞，同時也允許自己對各個出現的體驗做出清新的回應。

宏觀地觀察生命，看似抽離，其實它只是讓我們更加投入生命。

這期雜誌的主題是探討我們與生命的對話。面對每天平凡無奇的生活，我們是否有如機械般運作？生活有時很刺激，有時既痛苦又難以捉摸。其實，如果我們持著一個真正開放的態度，任何狀況都是一個讓我們細嚼生命的機會，一個讓我們欣然迎上的邀請。

把心安住，我們可以更直接、簡單和投入地與我們的念頭、情緒和環境交流。「禪修不是抽離——你不是把自己收起來，從世間撤退。相反的，你是要更加投入世間。一直以來，這個世界從未把它所有的形態展現給我們看，因為我們從來不允許它這樣做。」禪修老師丘陽·創巴仁波切在《工作、性、與金錢》一書中寫道。

只要把心敞開，見到流星也好，見不到也沒問題，生命還是繼續。

Whenever autumn comes around, I remember that I've yet to see a shooting star in the Hong Kong sky.

I live in a village where there's plenty of visible sky overhead. My neighbour, who loves the outdoors, says autumn is the season for stargazing and reckons that everyone in the village has seen at least one falling star – except me.

When I wailed about my bad luck, she said: "Cheh, it's because you never look."

Touché. My mind's often preoccupied, and I see not what is there but what I want to see.

We all know that we view the world selectively, of course. So we try to read more – and more widely. We travel the world, take up new interests and meet new people. We do our best to listen to and accept other points of view.

All these are useful measures. Yet it seems that the more we learn, the more opinionated we become.

When we look at what's happening around – and inside – us, what is it we see? People who've made an art of paying attention say there is plenty we don't notice. Buddhist meditation teachers describe the mind as that which is aware and clear: the ability to see clearly is our birthright.

In an excerpt from the book *Joyful Wisdom*, reproduced in this issue of the magazine, Yongey Mingyur Rinpoche introduces a practice that involves paying attention to what is there while letting go of our judgments and opinions. This allows us to distinguish our judgments from the simple experience of seeing. Not only does this practice bring self-understanding, but it also changes the way we relate to life.

"In that moment of pausing to just be aware," Mingyur Rinpoche says, "we open ourselves not only to the possibility of bypassing habitual ideas, emotions, and responses to physical sensation, but also to responding freshly to each experience as it occurs."

Interestingly, this apparently more detached way of attending to our experiences actually helps us live life more – not less – fully.

This issue of the magazine deals with our engagement with ordinary life. Day-to-day living can sometimes seem like a prefabricated series of situations, which we go through as if by default. At the opposite extreme, living can be exhilarating, painful or deeply bewildering. However they appear, life situations offer opportunities for creative engagement – if we take a genuinely open approach to working with them.

Through the practice of resting our mind, we rediscover what it is like to relate to our thoughts and emotions, and the circumstances in which we find ourselves – directly, simply and fully. "Meditation is not a matter of withdrawing – you are not drawing in, retreating from the world," says meditation teacher Chogyam Trungpa in the book *Work, Sex, Money*. "In fact, you are getting into the world. Until now, the world hasn't been able to show us its fullest expressions, because we never let it happen."

If we open ourselves to the world, we can trust that it will show us its fullest expressions. Perhaps someday I'll see a shooting star or two. If not, that's fine too; there is this thing called life.

生活與生命 的對話



我們每天的生活可以是平平無奇， 有時很刺激，有時既痛苦又難以捉摸。 無論遇上什麼狀況，我們是否都可以把心打開， 欣然地迎接生命？

這是一段不完整的記憶片斷。

好幾年前，父親患病住進了醫院。一日下午，我坐在父親身旁，醫生正好過來詢問他的病情，身體哪個部位仍有疼痛？胃口如何？有沒有感到胸口鬱悶等等……

因為是循例探訪，我沒太留意。可是，接下來的這段對話卻出乎我意料之外：

「你覺得你的人生快樂嗎？」醫生問。

父親頓了片刻，說他覺得自己很失敗。

記憶裡，我當時只是面無表情地坐著。驚愕之餘，我也說不上當時複雜心情裡的箇中情緒，感覺……就像是慢動作的地震吧。

我從沒有問及父親為什麼他這樣說，也從未與他談及這個話題。多年後，我曾和弟弟聊天時提起這件事，但已經忘記弟弟的反應了。

父親今年 81 歲，健康狀況尚算樂觀。雖然我和他不是居住在同一個城市裡，我們的關係卻比以前親近。遇上身體不適，他有時仍會一如以往地變得悶悶不樂，不過平時的心情還算輕鬆，有時候更像小孩一樣愛玩。

我不擔心他。

美國詩人瑪麗·奧利弗的作詩靈感大多是來自大自然，但不是明信片上日落黃昏的那種風格。她描繪的大自然有血有肉；有罌粟花在風中搖曳點綴的金色曠野，也有腐爛的百合花及吞噬蟋蟀和老鼠的貓頭鷹。在她的作品中，血或污垢都是生與死壯麗的表達。

她的詩句不時湧動入心，我喜歡這一句：

「告訴我，你打算如何對待你這頑強、珍貴的一生？」

喜歡它，是因為它提醒我，生命是一種責任，一種特權。獲得它，我心存感激。

我要如何活著？

我相信每個人都曾經問過自己為甚麼活著。大多數人不會花太多時間去思考它，又或是他們不願多說。坦白說，那些常常把生命的意義掛在嘴邊的人，確實是令人納悶。

我不是嘲笑，也沒有資格嘲笑，因為我以前常常這樣做。

這種思維的探索實在太累了，我將之放

棄，是因為我發現我把問題問錯了。人生的意義是什麼？解答很多，雖然各有不同，卻都是說得通的。首先給自己製造了若干問題，一番苦思後再得到一個自己認為滿意的答案——這不過是一場自娛自樂的遊戲。

無論生命的意義是什麼，我們似乎都同時過著兩種生活：一種是日常的生活：起床、吃飯、沖涼、思考、感受及睡覺；另一種的生活則是在大腦裡，一直在做實況解說的生活。

例如，如果我去旅行，實際經歷的有兩個旅程：一個是每一刻發生著的旅途，另一個是經過包裝的旅遊故事——有頭有尾、有相片，以及一些千載難逢、難忘的體會。不論有沒有聽眾，我總是不辭勞苦地在編寫。我終於明白，那是編給自己聽的。

無疑地，這個旅遊故事比假期本身更令人愉快。

「如是的生命」和「我認為的生活」之間的斷層很折磨人，但我還可以接受，因為我以為那是人的必然狀態。畢竟，每個人都有認為、有判斷、能分析，有一個喜歡做實況解說的習慣，難道不是自然不過嗎？

原來我誤解了事實。當禪修老師形容身心之間的分離時，我很快地認識到這就是自己的狀態。很高興聽到有一種簡單及直接的生活方式。通過一些練習，原來我們能夠嘗試將心與身同步。

要簡單地生活，只要覺知著每個經驗的發生，放下習慣性的粉飾。當念頭來臨，標記它就是念頭，然後不需要太在意它。

所以最近，與其問什麼是生命的意義，我倒不如做家務。

多年來，我聘請鐘點工做一些我不喜歡的清潔工作，例如清洗廁所、拖地。但現在我嘗試自己做，當作是觀察我身心分離的好機會。

念頭總是領跑在前。當在晾衣服時，我的手拎起一條毛巾，但已經想著把襪子晾在旁邊的架子上。這種情況經常發生。我在清洗著杯子的時候，已經思索著要把待會兒要烹飪的番茄從冰箱裡取出。

然而，當我注意到思緒遊走之際，我的心

已經回來了，安住在當下的時刻。當我不強迫自己停止思考的時候，念頭的來去就變得自由，輕鬆了。覺知著覺知，活得很是踏實。

我不能確定這是不是禪修。這只是我的一些發現——儘量允許自己沒有目的、沒有批判地存在，心可以是這個樣子。

禪修需要坐墊上的練習。但是，把覺察注入日常生活的每一個時刻也很有用。在工作中，放鬆是最好的方式，我可以更好、更準確地回應需要做什麼。在家庭生活中，當我不跟自己過不去時，就可以從容地面對每一種情況，我的家人也開始變得放鬆坦然。我明白這是需要耐性的。

當我們在生活中與每一刻有著直接、新鮮的交流時，似乎就不需要對生命作出不停的評估。

沒有人喜歡在臨死時認為他們是虛度一生。

我不知道父親當時經歷了什麼事情而說出那樣的話。我猜想，他和我與你並沒有什麼不同，都是在希望與恐懼的伴隨中渡過每一天。

沒必要問什麼是生命，因為根本無從解釋。它不是被定義的，而是要被經歷的。

文字／陳旨均

翻譯自英文版本／戴林焱



攝影 林偉雄

我感受到了：寫著一篇文章，聽著一首樂章，手指頭在鍵盤上配合著音律的起伏，彷彿就在鍵盤上彈奏著一首一個人的旋律。今天談的是平凡生活。平平無奇的一個我，就這樣放下自己，讓這個題目重新帶領我的心去探索、沉澱、體會，把自己從好像充實得喘不過氣的生活中，重新感受生活的氣息。

我喜歡美學，讓我引用蔣勳在他的《美的覺醒》的序言：「美的覺醒，其實只是使你『看到』『聽到』『嗅到』『觸摸到』『品味到』生命美好的存在。」或許，現在的我和你，都是身處在鬧市、繁重的生活中；可是，就容許我邀請您跟我和蔣勳一起，試試深呼吸，放慢腳步，聽聽自己內在的聲音……

「有多久你的腳掌沒有感覺泥土與青草的柔軟了？

有多久你不曾聽到鳥的鳴叫啼嘯？

有多久你沒有感覺到春天空氣裡初放的花的清香？

有多久你看不到暗夜裡天上明亮的星辰？

有多久你不曾在口中回味母親小火煎赤鯨的香？

有多久你遺忘了愛人靜靜擁抱的溫暖？

有多久你想不起來某一個人身上遺忘不了的氣味？

有多久你不相信你的手握住另一隻手是多麼重要的安慰？

有多久你不曾在沐浴時按摩自己疲倦的肩膀？」

對我這個每天在辦公室朝九晚五工作的文員來說，生活其實就只是生活，平淡無味，每天比如一個工廠裡的機械齒輪，只等待每天早上，手提電話內的響鬧裝置喚醒，一天的運作就開始，日復日繼續扮演著不同的角色，肩負上不同的責任，努力重覆的生活著。也許，我們可以吃一個美味的午餐，說一個很好笑的笑話，下班看一齣驚險的電影，再看看一些花邊的新聞，就這樣調劑一下我們的生活，日子也就這樣渾過去了。直到有一日，一瞬間，可能我們會停下來反問自己：「我在做甚麼？」

其實，我也忘記了有多久我沒有好好感受

過我的生活了。我一直很嚮往放假，去遨遊不同的地方，去體驗這個世界，把握青春光陰去追尋我的夢想。可是，當去過了一些地方，盡情到處暢遊過後，漸漸我才發現，無論我去過那裡，無論吃過多好吃的東西，玩過多好玩的玩意，看過多動人美麗的日出或日落，最後那都只是一樣，回到現實，瞬間都會過去了，留下的只有回憶的東西而已。

我這樣說，不是代表這些美好的回憶沒有它們的價值，而是我發現，我原來一直根本沒有好好去感受生命中給予我的一切。驀然回首，才認清生活，它本來不是一種感官或心靈上的追逐，而是需要我們真正去全情投入，願意開放我們的感受，接受與信任生命本來的面貌，我們才會從生活中感受到生命每刻帶給我們每個人那種本來的觸動。

我們每個人很多時候，容易對生活感到麻木、重覆、乏味，每刻都想找點趣味的、新奇的、刺激的玩意兒，彷彿這樣便能證明自己生活得多姿多彩，存在得積極實在。由始至終，這都不是一個問題。真正的問題是，我們能否察覺到選擇權是否還在你的手中？

我們可否察覺到歲月在你我的髮膚之間掠過，時間如流沙從我們的指縫間散落。每天醒過來，我們會否猶如一隻從不溫飽的野獸，於浩瀚的天地拼命捕捉獵物。努力在外面去探險，目的是不斷為未來、為夢想去努力、追逐。每一刻，就是要把我們需要的都據為己有，竭力尋求一種全新的經驗。可是，誰知道卻一次又一次把自己沉溺在一種無意識的重覆當中，不能活脫。

或許生活的意義，在於生命是有限的。每個人都想用自己的努力，把握自己生命的每分每刻。有人想嘗遍天下的美食，有人想走過世界每一個角落，有人想認識生命中不能錯失的人。此時，我們曾否停下來，深深地呼吸，用我們的心再一次問自己，我們為什麼活著？嘗試輕撫自己的臉龐，放鬆慢慢地往內去看，再次看看內在那一份初衷。

人能夠感受生活，源自一顆察覺的心。這最大的分別是我們有一種自知、有一個中心點。

生活原來可以是一個全新的體驗，也可以是每天重覆的活動。這一切的重點是在於我們的心，我們在用甚麼的心去經驗每一件事情，去過我們的生活。在這個經驗的過程中，我們能否往內去看看，我們每個人的「何謂好」，「何謂不好」，放下自己與不同人的觀點和批評，單純看看我們內心的標準與喜好是從哪裏慢慢建立過來。

那種生活，再不是建立於一種不滿足的感覺上，而是在一種飽滿和豐盛的滿足感之上。這種體驗猶如你喝的水，再不是愈喝愈感到口渴的鹽水；而是一杯透明剔透，甘甜回味的白開水。

還記得，那青葱年代的我是一個自我感覺與眾不同的人，總看到自己是怎樣獨特。眼裡看見別人，心裡卻瞧不起人。暗地裡有一種不可一世、骨子裡孤高自賞的自傲，在不知不覺發酵著。現在，當我細心回想，其實每個人都是獨一無二，也是與別不同。那為什麼我心裡需要有特別的、平凡的分別。當我內心愈想成為一個與眾不同的人，諷刺的是愈發覺自己平凡不已。誰不知道，原來那只是一種自我存在的模式在暗地裡作祟。

直到有一天，我看到了。我的生命、我的生活、我看待自己和與世界相處的方式都改變了。原來當我們看到了自己，再放下自己的生命，願意真誠地打開內心去體會，才能真正活出自己。從日常生活中，每刻我們都可以去感受到存在的意義，彷彿每一樣平凡的東西，你也會看到它不再平凡了——一種純粹的觸動！感謝生命，我感受到了——一種幸福的滋味！

文字／何家銳

THIS THING CALLED LIFE

This is a fragment of my memory, so it may not be entirely accurate.

Some years ago, my father was quite sick in hospital. I sat with him while the doctor visited one afternoon. Chart in hand, the doctor asked him how he felt: Where does it hurt? Are you able to eat? Any tightness in the chest? And so on.

Then came a question I did not expect:
"Are you happy with your life?"

I heard my father say no, that he felt like a failure.

I said nothing at the time, and I'm sure my face was expressionless, betraying nothing of what I felt. But what did I feel? Shock, certainly. Till today I cannot pin down the emotions. It felt like... an earthquake in slow motion.

I never asked my father why he said that. In fact we never talked about it. Years later, I might have mentioned it in passing to my brother. If I did, I have forgotten his reaction.

Today my father is in fair health – excellent, really, for someone in his 80s – and we've gotten closer in the last few years, even though we don't live in the same city. He becomes more irritable when he's not feeling well, as before, but as far as I can tell he's generally relaxed and easy-going, even playful.

I don't worry about him.

The American poet Mary Oliver draws her inspiration from nature, though not of the sunset-pretty variety. She writes about golden fields of swaying poppies, yes, but also decaying lilies and owls that devour crickets and mice. In her works, blood and dirt are expressions of life and death, and therefore magnificent.

Lines from her poems come to mind from time to time. I'm fond of this one:

*Tell me, what is it you plan to do
with your one wild and precious life?*

I like it because it reminds me that my life is a responsibility and a privilege, something for which to be grateful.

What will I do?

I believe everyone wonders about the point of living. Most people don't spend too much time on it, or they don't articulate it. And those who do go on about the meaning of life can be – let's be honest – a little tedious.

I am not mocking, if only because I used to do it myself.

I stopped only after I saw that it was a mind game: so many answers, all different, and all correct. It was I who created the question then twisted myself into knots to get at the answers. It was entertaining before I realised it was only entertainment.

Whatever life's meaning, we seem to be living two lives. There is the actual living, which involves waking up, eating, cleaning myself, thinking, feeling and sleeping; and then there is the life in my head – you know, the one that comes with a running commentary.

If I took a holiday, for example, there were two journeys: the one that happened from moment to moment; and then the story I told about my trip – mostly to myself but sometimes to others – complete with highlights, photos and once-in-a-lifetime experiences.

Hands down, the story was more satisfying than the holiday itself.

This split between "life as it is" and "life as I think" is exhausting, but I'd always accepted it as part of being human. Doesn't everyone think, judge and analyse? If so, surely there's no escaping the running commentary?

It turns out this is not true. When meditation teachers talked about the split between mind and body, I quickly recognised it to be my own condition. And I was glad to hear that there is a way to live more simply, and more directly. With some practice, we can try to synchronise mind and body.

This involves attending to our experiences as they happen, and as they are, letting go of the tendency to dress them up. When thoughts come, label them as thoughts and move on.

So, lately, instead of asking what life means, I started doing housework.

For years I've hired part-time help to do the chores I dislike, such as cleaning the toilet and

mopping the floor. Now I try to do them myself, and take them as opportunities to observe how my restless mind has great difficulty keeping company with my actions.

It always wants to race ahead. When laying out the laundry to dry, my hand picks up a face towel but my mind is already imagining putting the sock next to it on the rack. This happens constantly. I rinse a cup under running water while thinking of the tomato I have to cut for cooking later.

Yet, the moment I notice my mind wandering off, it is already back, resting on the present moment. And when I don't force myself to stop thinking, the very act of thinking sometimes slows by itself. The result is that I feel more grounded and more alive, simply by being aware that I'm aware.

I don't know if this is meditation, truly. It's just what I find when I try to let myself be – without purpose, without judgment.

Meditation takes practice, which we do on a cushion. But bringing awareness to every aspect of our life is also deeply satisfying. At work, for example, it is always better to be relaxed than not: I respond better and more accurately to what needs to be done. With family, I find that when I allow myself to be as I am, at peace with every situation in which I find myself, they also begin to relax and be as they are. It takes patience, of course.

When there is space for creative, direct engagement with life, there seems to be less need for a constant evaluation of life.

No one likes to be on their death bed and think they have lived in vain.

I don't know what my father was going through at the time that led him to say what he said. I suspect it was no different than what I, or you, go through every day as we tangle with the hopes and fears of our very ordinary lives.

There's no need to ask what life is, because life just is. This "is-ness" or "suchness" of life, as meditation teachers term it, awaits all of us; it is not to be explained but experienced.

Text: Chen Zhijun

Day-to-day living can sometimes seem routine.
It can be exhilarating, painful or deeply bewildering.
Through it all, can we remain open to whatever life brings?
We ask two people to share what they find

I feel it: The music is playing as I write, and I find my fingers tapping on the keyboard in rhythm, as if I were writing a song. My topic today is "ordinary life". It suits me, being ordinary. So I will take a break from the hectic pace of urban living, and let the topic lead me where it will, to feel again the freshness of life.

I am drawn to aesthetics. In his book, *The Awakening of Beauty*, Taiwanese art critic Chiang Xun described the awakening of beauty as "nothing more than allowing you to 'see', 'hear', 'smell', 'touch' and 'taste' the goodness of existence". Perhaps, you, like me, live a busy life in a crowded city. I invite you to follow Chiang Xun's lead, take a deep breath, slow down your steps and listen to your heart:

"When was the last time you felt the softness of soil and grass?

When was the last time you heard birdsong?

When was the last time you smelled the fragrance of a spring blossom?

When was the last time you saw stars?

When was the last time you recalled the taste of the seabream your mother pan-fried over low heat?

When was the last time you remembered a lover's warm embrace?

When was the last time you remembered the smell of someone you swore you would never forget?

When was the last time you massaged your tired shoulders in the shower?"

To a nine-to-five office worker like myself, life is just life, nothing fancy. Like a cog in a machine, I wait every morning for my phone alarm to wake me up in the morning, and the routine begins. I play the parts to which I am assigned, take up the duties that are my responsibility, day after day after day.

We can eat a good lunch, share a joke, watch a thriller in the cinema after work, catch up on celebrity gossip. All of this is entertainment. Before we know it, the day is over. And so it goes – until the day we suddenly stop and ask ourselves: "What am I doing?"

How long has it been since I have felt alive?

Like many others, I, too, hope to travel the world to experience its variety, and to pursue my youthful dreams. But after having gone away, I began to realise that, no matter where I've been, what wonderful food I've tasted and how many beautiful sunsets I've seen, I still come back to reality. The moments fade and all I have are memories.

I don't mean to say that these memories are worthless. The problem is, I feel I haven't really experienced all that life has to offer. When I look back, I see that life isn't a pursuit to soothe the senses or lift the spirits. Life demands that we give it our all, to feel every moment it has to offer, to accept and trust what it brings, no matter what it is. Only then will we be touched by life.

It's easy to feel numbed by routine. So we try to fill our lives with new, exciting experiences, as if to show ourselves how full and rich our lives are, to prove the worth of our existence. But the point is: are you choosing freely?

Do you feel time slipping away? When we wake every morning, do we feel like a beast that is forever ravenous, trying to get its fill everywhere and anywhere. We strike out, and work hard for our future and for our dreams. We want to own what we think we need; it's always something new. Actually, we are trapped, mindlessly repeating a pattern of unconscious behaviour.

Maybe the meaning of life rests in the fact that it is limited. Everyone tries their utmost to make full use of every moment of their lives. Some people want to eat the world's best food, some want to visit every continent on earth, some want to meet their soulmate. But how many of us ever stop to take a deep breath and ask ourselves, "why are we living?"

Our innate awareness allows us to live fully. It helps us to find our centre. This is why life can be fresh or routine. It all depends on our attitude to life, and whether we have looked inside ourselves and examined our ideas of good and bad. It depends on whether we are willing to give way to other people's viewpoints and dial down our criticism of others. All we need to do is watch how notions of good and bad are formed in our minds.

In this way, we will not be living life from a

position of poverty, but one of richness. It is as if we are no longer drinking salt water, which makes us more thirsty. Instead, we are drinking plain water, which is clear and bittersweet.

When I was younger, I thought I was special, different from everyone else. I thought I was better than others. I didn't know arrogance was like a virus that infected my heart. But now I know: every person is special in their own way. The irony is, this desire to be special perhaps marks me out to be most commonplace. It has everything to do with the ego.

After I see this, my life changed. How I see myself, and how I interact with the world have all changed. As it turned out, if we are willing to face ourselves honestly, and live our lives in a way that is true to who we are, we can open our hearts to experience life fully.

So, if we let it, every moment in daily life will alert us to the meaning of existence. It turns the ordinary into something extraordinary. Life moves us, just like that. It's a blessing for which I am truly grateful.

Text: Kerry Ho

Translated from the Chinese by: Chen Zhijun

香港人

HUMANS OF HONG KONG

攝影 / 文字 樓佳 Photography and text Jackie Lou

星期天下午，維多利亞公園是一個人流不絕、與人共處的好地方。這一輯照片取材於香港，靈感來自世界各地的人氣攝影博客，包括廣受歡迎的 Humans of New York。

All around the world, people are photographing the residents of their neighbourhood and sharing them via social media, such as on the popular photo blog Humans of New York. In that spirit, we pay tribute to Hong Kong people in this series of photos taken on a Sunday afternoon in Victoria Park.



「你係咪日日都嚟呀？」

「係呀，我每日都會嚟行下，朝早就會嚟做運動。我好鍾意呢度啲樹。」

「你幾多歲？」

「84。」

「你倆經常一齊嚟？」

「係呀。」

"Do you come here every day?"

"Yes, I come for a walk here every day, and in the morning I come here to exercise. I like the trees here."

"How old are you?"

"84."

"And do you two always come together?"

"Yes."



「你睇緊咩書呀？」

「Game of thrones —— 我好鐘意套劇集，所以想睇翻本書。」

「點解會揀响呢度睇？」

「其實係學校搞 O camp, 我要幫手睇住個位。」

「咁你要响呢度坐幾耐？」

「一點至五點。」

"What are you reading?"

"Game of thrones. I liked the show, so I want to read the book."

"Why did you pick this spot?"

"Well, I'm actually stationed here for my school's camp activity."

"How long do you need to sit here?"

"From 1 to 5."



「保安係度有咩做？」

「我哋要留意有咩唔妥，但一般嚟講呢度都好太平。啲人多數都係走嚟問路，好似點樣去酒店，邊度有洗手間……」

「有咩最難忘嘅事係你當值時發生過？」

「試過有次有人暈咗，我哋就 call 白車。」

"What's it like being a security guard here?"

"We look out for anything unusual going on. But things are usually peaceful. People come and ask for directions – to a hotel, where are the toilet..."

"What's the most memorable thing that has happened while you're on duty?"

"One time someone fainted and we had to call an ambulance."



「咁你係咪好鐘意踢波㗎？」

「唔……都唔係㗎。」

"So you like soccer?"

"Umm... not really."



「你睇緊咩呀？」
「印尼報紙。」
「你嚟咗香港幾耐？」
「廿幾年喇。」

"What are you reading?"
"Indonesian newspaper."
"How long have you been in Hong Kong?"
"More than 20 years."

後記

在寫這篇感想的晚上，我在旺角火車站外，從一位慈眉善眼的老伯那裡，買了一隻用水竹葉編織的草蚱。橙黃的街燈下，綠色的編織物在微風裡搖曳。老伯伯的小攤和車站來來往往的人流，構成一幅溫馨的畫面，可是就當我拿起手機拍攝的時候，老伯突然憤怒地指著我，破口大罵。我狼狽地轉身逃入車站，背後是路人不解的目光和老伯不絕的怒吼。

是的，差不多半年前，當我向雜誌編輯提議雜誌可以做一輯類似 Humans of New York 的照片時，她說在香港很難辦到，因為這座城裡的大多數人面對相機的鏡頭或陌生人的訪問時，會有一種習慣性的逃避。（其實我自己也是如此。）沒有想到幾個月後，她還是給了我這個機會去嘗試，並且和其他兩位義工一起陪我在八月一個禮拜天的下午去維園做這個練習。烈日當空，我們一個個向那天下午經過維園的路人，介紹雜誌的攝影計畫，然後提出拍攝的邀請。沒有做統計，不過我估計我們問過的人裡，可能只有不到三分之一的人接受了我們的邀請。有些拒絕的人甚至遠遠看到我們就避開，有些願意停下腳步聊天，卻無論如何不可以拍照。願意被拍攝的是印尼的女傭、歐洲的背包客、放暑假的小學生、等候朋友的大學生，還有一位笑得特別開心的婆婆。她一邊走，一邊對著鏡頭微笑揮手，反覆地說「大家都要 happy！」

呆呆地望著手裡的草蚱，我試圖理解為什麼老伯突然就那麼憤怒。一直在我身邊的朋友解釋說：也許老伯也有自己的苦衷，因為現在的人們太多用相機去記錄他人的行為，然後放到網絡上任意批評的。在我眼裡一個美麗的畫面可能到別人的手裡便是「罪證」，它可能斷了老伯的生計。眼淚忍不住掉下來，不是因為被誤解，只是傷感從何時開始「攝影」這樣一個「平凡」的行為，竟然在人們的眼裡充滿了懷疑、反感、甚至敵意？

這些照片很普通，裡面的人物有不同年齡、不同膚色和不同職業，但是當快門打開的那一瞬間，他們每一個人都將一份這個社會裡愈來愈稀缺的信任，通過鏡頭傳遞給了相機背後的我。對此，我只能說「謝謝」。

Afterword

Earlier tonight, I bought a hand-woven "grasshopper" from a kindly looking old man outside Mong Kok station. Under the street lamp, these creatures made of bamboo leaves were swaying in the autumn breeze. With people streaming in and out of the station, the man's little stand was the centre of a heart-warming image. But as soon as I took out my camera to capture a picture, he started yelling at me. Embarrassed, I scuttled into the station, leaving behind the uncomprehending looks of passers-by and the old man's angry shouts.

Almost half a year ago, I suggested to the editor that perhaps the Joy of Living magazine could publish a photo essay similar to the immensely popular Humans of New York project. She replied that it would be very difficult to carry out in Hong Kong, because people here won't tolerate having their photos taken, let alone entertain personal questions from a stranger. (Actually, I have to admit I'm like that myself.) Surprisingly, a few months later, the editor gave me an opportunity to try, and even accompanied me, along with two other volunteers at Tergar Meditation Centre, on a "shooting trip" to Victoria Park on a Sunday afternoon in August.

I didn't collect any statistics, but I'd say about a third of the people we approached agreed to be photographed. Among those who said no, some would not even make eye contact; some stopped to chat but still insisted, "No photo!" But we had OKs from Indonesian domestic helpers, backpackers from Europe, primary school students on summer holiday, university students waiting for friends, and a granny who cheered us up with her contagious smile and advice: "Everyone, be happy!"

Staring at the "grasshopper" in my hand, I tried to fathom why the old man became so angry. A friend who was with me suggested an explanation: too many people nowadays use their cameras and phones to document other people's behaviour and post them on the internet for criticism and public shaming. Perhaps a beautiful image in my eyes was in his a piece of potential evidence of his illegal hawking, and could be used to stop him making a living.

At that moment, I could no longer hold back my tears, not because I had been misunderstood, but because I was saddened by the fact that the innocuous act of taking a picture could seem so suspicious, annoying, and even hostile.

These are really ordinary shots; the people in them are of different ages, races and occupations. But the moment I clicked the shutter, every one of them entrusted themselves to me. For this precious gift of trust, I can only say "thank you".

就只是「看」

節錄自《你是幸運的》第七章

打字 王詠璇 攝影 林偉雄

一旦把心安住在覺性中，我們便開始認清周遭的所見所聞，以及自己的見解與判別。這種練習有助於我們開展自心的本然明性，詠給·明就仁波切寫道

任由「心」自由發展的話，它就像一隻好動的鳥，總是在樹林間飛來飛去，或從樹上俯衝到地面，然後又飛到另一棵樹上。在這個比喻中，樹枝、地面和另一棵樹，代表五種感知以及念頭和情緒對我們的索求。它們看似有趣，有強烈的吸引力。我們的內心和周遭「總是」有事發生，所以，可憐好動的鳥就很難平靜下來。難怪我遇到那麼多的人在抱怨，他們大部分的時間都處在壓力之下。這種飛來飛去的情況，發生在感知超載以及念頭和情緒需要關注的情況，導致我們很難保持放鬆和專注。

我小時候學到的第一堂基本修持，這是多數老師會教給初學的學生，也就是讓「小鳥」平靜下來。

在梵文中，這個修持就是奢摩他 (shamatha，即「止禪」)；在藏文中，就是息內 (shinay，也是「止禪」)。「奢摩」(shama) 和「息」(shi) 有很多含意，即讓內心、情緒和感官刺激歸於「平靜」、「安住」或「冷靜」，這就是現代人說的「靜下來」。梵文的「他」(tha) 跟藏文的「內」(nay)，意思是「停駐」或「停留」。換句話說，奢摩他或息內的意思就是，處於休息或「靜下來」的狀態，讓小鳥在樹枝上坐一會兒。

大部分的人看事物、聽聲音，或觀察念頭和情緒都有判別。這判別可以從三種基本「樹枝」來瞭解：「我喜歡的」樹枝、「我不喜歡的」樹枝，或「我不知道的」樹枝。每一根樹枝再分支出更小的樹枝：「好的」樹枝、「壞的」

樹枝、「令人愉悅的」樹枝、「令人討厭的」樹枝、「我喜歡它是因為……」的樹枝、「我不喜歡它是因為……」的樹枝、「可能是好的或壞的」樹枝、「可能是美好或不美好的」樹枝、「可能是既好又壞、既令人愉悅也惹人厭煩的」樹枝。小鳥被這些樹枝吸引，並且在其中飛來飛去，一一勘查。

奢摩他和息內的修持，就是無論我們停在哪根樹枝並看到了甚麼，放下判別和見解，就只是「看」。也許我們看到樹枝和樹葉的遮障，但是，這時我們不必為了要有更好的視野而在樹林間穿梭，只是看著每一根樹枝和葉子，注意它們的形狀和顏色。我們只停在一根樹枝上。以這種方式去注意體驗時，我們就能從單純看的體驗中，區分出我們的判別和見解。

這個修持蘊涵甚深的含意，幫助我們面對日常遭遇的麻煩情緒與問題。我們的體驗多半受到我們坐的那根樹枝與前方樹枝遮障的影響。但是，如果我們只是直觀我們的體驗，那就能如實看著每根樹枝、每片葉子，以及我們的見解和判別——不會混在一起，而是了了分明的體驗。在停歇的時候，只要意識到自己不只對於經過的習慣想法、情緒和感官知覺的反應保持開敞，同時也對各個出現的體驗做出清新的回應。

這個單純的覺性，是佛性的明性展現：「觀察」以及「知道正在觀察」的能力，沒有任何概念附加和覆蓋視線。我們能夠認出「我喜歡」、「我不喜歡」等等的概念，就像我們能區別樹枝、葉子或花朵。明性是無限的，所以我們一次能掌握所有不同的事物，而且不會將它們混在一起。事實上，即使我們沒有刻意留意它，明性仍然一直在運作，像是意識到飢餓和疲累、認出塞車、區分辣椒粉和芝士。沒有明性就無法思考、感覺或感知事物。奢摩他和息內的修持，幫助我們開展並體會自身的本然明性。

奢摩他和息內的修持方法有很多種。這些年來，許多人向我請求循序漸進的指導。「我應該先做什麼呢？」他們問，「我下一步應該做什麼？」本書接下來的內容，將按部就班地講述每個基本修持的方法。

沉浸在「啊」這個當下

最基本的專注方法，就是「無所緣」——不專注在特定的「地方」或體驗，只是看著並驚嘆來來去去的全景。最近我到巴西里約，經常去附近一座高大的山丘爬山，山上遍佈了類似叢林的植物和樹木，結滿了纍纍果實。爬到半山腰時，我覺得很累，我被淹沒在酷熱、濕氣、高度和各種樹葉之中。山上有些地方有木椅和長凳，於是我坐在椅子上休息，單純的覺察身體的疲累和周遭的環境。

你不需要去里約爬山，就能體會這種「開敞的放鬆和覺性」。當你洗完一堆碗盤之後，你就能有這種體會。洗完碗盤後，你會坐在椅子上大嘆一口氣，「啊」。你的身體很累，但是，心很平靜，完全的敞開，徹底的靜止，沉浸在「啊」這個當下。也許你的小孩在隔壁房間發出噪音，也許你正在看電視，電視的畫面不斷切換，廣告不斷插進來。但是，沒有什麼能打斷你「啊」的感覺。念頭、感覺和感官知覺來來去去，但是，你只是看著它們。

當你安住在「啊」時，你輕柔地，或是佛教傳統說的「赤裸裸」注意著念頭、感覺和感官知覺，當下單純的敞開。過去（洗碗盤或到南美叢林爬山）已經過去了，未來（更多的碗盤、更多的叢林、付帳單或管教小孩）尚未到來。當下此地，只有眼前的「啊」。

這就是讓心安住於「無所緣」的方法，這就好像你剛完成一項繁重艱難的工作，你只要放下且放鬆，不需要阻止任何念頭、情緒或感官知覺的生起，也不必追隨他們。安住在當下的「啊」。如果念頭、情緒或感官知覺生起，單純的覺察它們就行了。

無所緣，並非只是讓心漫無目的遊蕩在幻想、記憶或白日夢之中。你並沒有特別凝視在一樣事物上，但是，你仍然覺察著，仍然處於當下此地發生的一切。

修持「無所緣禪修」時，其實是讓心安住在它本俱的明性中，不受經過的念頭、情緒和感官知覺的改變。本俱明性一直與我們同在，就像虛空一直是存在的。「無所緣」就像是讓



我們覺察到面前的樹枝和葉子的同時，先認出讓我們能夠「看到」樹枝和葉子的虛空；念頭、情緒和感官知覺，在覺性中變化和顫動，就像是樹枝和葉子在虛空中變化和顫動。此外，就像虛空並不是由經過它的物體來定義，覺性也不是由它所覺知到念頭、情緒和感官知覺定義和限制。覺性，單純就是「如是」。

「無所緣禪修」需要安住在「如是的狀態」中。當念頭、情緒和顯相等等在「虛空」之前或在其中出現時，我們就是單純的看著它們。有些人覺得這個修持就像洗完碗盤之後，坐在椅子上休息一樣容易，但有些人覺得很難。

以前我也覺得很難。每當父親和其他老師要向我解釋「無所緣禪修」時，我都覺得很困惑，而且有點生氣。我不能明白怎麼可能只是看著任何正在發生的事情而當作好像在看電影，或者，如同許多佛教典籍所說的「池中的月亮倒影」。當我極度焦慮時，我的念頭、感覺和感官知覺看起來並不像什麼倒影啊！它們看起來非常可怕，非常真實。幸好我們還可以用其他的步驟，引導我們通過「單純覺察」的過程。

跟訊息做朋友

具有身形的眾生，多半的體驗都透過五種感知之一：看、聽、聞、嚐與觸。因為五種感知器官，或是大部分佛教典籍提到的「根識」(sense consciousness)，只能記錄感官知覺；因此，佛教科學提出了第六種感知，也就是「意識」(mental consciousness)。第六種感知，或稱第六識，不應該跟超感官知覺 (ESP) 混為一談，因為「超感官知覺」指的是能預知未來或其他神秘的能力。「意識」比較類似神經學所指的，它能接收來自感知的訊息並加以組織，然後形成概念或內心的影像。

「意識」就像之前提到的好動的鳥——從這根樹枝飛到另一根，它在每根樹枝上看風景。小鳥試圖瞭解所接收訊息的含意，然後，就得做出反應。不過，教導小鳥稍做停歇，謹慎去專注其中一個感知是有可能的。

該怎麼做呢？

在一般體驗的過程中，心習慣去注視感官的訊息。然而，透過我們的感官所接收的訊息，多半是散亂的來源。不過，因為我們是有身形的眾生，如果企圖要完全擺脫我們的感官，或阻擋從感官所接收的訊息，這必然是徒勞無益的。比較切實可行的做法是：跟訊息做朋友，利用它作為讓心平靜的方法。

就我所學到的，建立友誼最簡單的方法是，專注在一個「視覺對境」上，比如一朵玫瑰。「好的玫瑰」、「不好的玫瑰」、「我不知道的玫瑰」……等等，我們怎麼想或感覺並不重要。如果我們只是如是看著它，就能夠開始將「我們的見解」與「單純看的體驗」分開。我們的見解本身並沒有好、壞或不知道。但是，當這些見解與事物撞擊時，我們的心就會散亂。我們會納悶：「這是好玫瑰還是壞玫瑰？我上次看到玫瑰是什麼時候？」這隻好動的鳥從這根樹枝飛到另一根，試圖要「瞭解」這朵玫瑰。然而，在這裡，玫瑰不是用來理解的，僅只是讓人欣賞。

運用視覺作為安住自心的方法，專門術語是「色相禪修法」。聽起來有點嚇人，對吧？嚴謹且精確。其實「色相禪修法」很簡單，我們不自覺的整天都在做這個修持。當我們看著一樣東西，像電視螢幕、水槽的髒碗盤，或雜貨店裡排在我們前面的人。「色相禪修法」純粹是將不自覺的過程，提升到自覺的層次。你只是赤裸專注的看著特定對境，好動的鳥就會安歇在樹枝上。

不管你選擇注視什麼對境——玫瑰、電視螢幕或雜貨店裡排在你前方付帳的人，你會注意到對境有兩個部分：形狀與顏色。你可以專注在你比較喜歡的部分。焦點本身沒有什麼關係。有些人容易被形狀吸引，有些人容易被顏色吸引。這個方法純粹是把注意力放在物體的顏色或形狀，覺察的程度只要能稍微辨識形狀或顏色就可以了。你不需要刻意注視每個細節，那樣做只會讓你更緊繃，「色相禪修法」的重點就是放鬆。保持舒適的專注，只要專注力足以維持對於所看對境的赤裸覺性即可。「視覺

對境」提供的只是讓心安住的參考點，扮演讓鳥停止在樹林飛來飛去的角色——至少休息一下，並讓它單純的安住。

怎麼練習

首先，依你的環境而定，採取最方便和舒服的身體姿勢。讓你的心安住在「無所緣」一會兒。只要觀察所有發生的念頭、感官知覺等等。然後，選擇注視著一樣東西——別人的頭髮顏色、他(她)的髮型，一朵玫瑰、一顆桃子或你的桌上型電腦——只要把注意力放在對境上，注意它的形狀或顏色。不需要死盯著它，需要眨眼就眨眼。注視別人或某樣事物片刻之後，讓你的心再一次單純地在無所緣中放鬆。接著，注意力再回到對境片刻，然後再一次讓心放鬆。

每當我修持以「視覺對境」為安住自心的助緣時，我就會想起，最初從父親那裡學到的一堂課。交替練習「有所緣」與前面提到的「無所緣」禪修，會帶來極大的利益。當心安住在對境時，你認為對境跟你是不同的或分開的；但是，當我們放下所緣的對境，並單純讓心安住在赤裸專注時，我們會逐漸瞭解，無論看到什麼，無論怎樣看，都是由我們的念頭、記憶所組成，而且受到感官習性的侷限。

換句話說，「所見到的事物」與「看見事物的心」並無不同。

LOOK, AND YOU'LL SEE

An excerpt from *Joyful Wisdom* Chapter 7

Typing Jamie Wong Photography Hung Lam

If we just look at our experience directly, we could see things as they are, and our opinions and judgments as they are – as distinct aspects of experience. This helps us to develop our inherent clarity, says Yongey Mingyur Rinpoche

Left to its own, the mind is like a restless bird, always flitting from branch to branch or sweeping down from a tree to the ground and then flitting up into another tree. In this analogy, the branches, the ground, and the other tree represent the demands we receive from our five senses, as well as thoughts and emotions. They all seem very interesting and powerfully attractive. And since there's always something going on in and around us, it's very hard for the poor restless bird to settle.

No wonder so many of the people I meet complain of being stressed most of the time! This kind of flitting about while our senses are overloaded and our thoughts and emotions are demanding recognition makes it very hard to stay relaxed and focused.

The first of the basic practices to which I was introduced as a child – which most teachers introduce to beginning students – involves allowing the little bird to settle. In Sanskrit, this practice is known as *shamatha*; in Tibetan, it is known as *shinay*. *Shama* and *shi* may be understood in a variety of ways, including "peace," "rest," or "cooling down" from a state of mental, emotional, or sensory excitement. Maybe a modern equivalent would be "chilling out." The Sanskrit *tha*, like the Tibetan *nay*, means to "abide" or "stay." In other words, *shamatha* or *shinay* means abiding in a state that is rested or "chilled out," which allows the little bird to sit on

one branch for a while.

Most of us, when we look at something, hear something, or watch a thought or emotion, have some sort of judgment about the experience. This judgment can be understood in terms of three basic "branches": the "I like it" branch, the "I don't like it" branch, or the "I don't know" branch. Each of these branches spreads out into smaller branches: "good" branch; "bad" branch; "pleasant" branch; "unpleasant" branch; "I like it because..." branch; "I don't like it because..." branch; "could be good or bad" branch; "could be nice or not" branch. The possibilities represented by all these branches tempt the little bird to flutter between them, investigating each one.

The practice of *shamatha* or *shinay* involves letting go of our judgments and opinions and just looking at, or paying attention to, what we see from whatever branch we're sitting on. Maybe we'll see a screen of branches and leaves. But instead of flitting from branch to branch to get a better view, just look at each branch or leaf, paying attention to its shape or color. Rest there on one branch. Attending to our experience in this way allows us to distinguish our judgments and opinions from the simple experience of seeing.

This practice has profound implications for the way we approach difficult emotions and the various problems we encounter in daily life. In most cases our experiences are conditioned by the branch we're sitting on the screen of branches before us. But if we just look at our experience directly, we could see each branch and leaf as it is, and our opinions and judgments as they are – not all mixed up together, but as distinct aspects of experience. In that moment of pausing to just be aware, we open ourselves not only to the possibility of bypassing habitual ideas, emotions, and responses to physical sensation, but also to responding freshly to each experience as it occurs.

This simple awareness is an expression of the clarity of our Buddha nature: the capacity to see and to recognize that we're seeing but without any concepts attached or clouding our vision. We can recognize the concepts of "I like," "I don't like," and so on, as distinct from branches, leaves, or

flowers. Because clarity is unlimited, we can hold all these different things at once without mixing them up.

Actually, clarity is always functioning, even when we're not consciously attentive to it: when we become aware of being hungry or tired, when we recognize a traffic jam, or distinguish a chili pepper from a package of cheese. Without clarity, we wouldn't be able to think, feel, or perceive anything. *Shamatha* or *shinay* practice helps us to develop and appreciate our inherent clarity.

There are many ways to approach *shamatha* or *shinay* practice. Many of the people I've met over the years have asked for a step-by-step guide. "What should I do first?" they ask. "What should I do next?" In the following pages, I'll attempt to describe a step-by-step approach to each of the basic practices.

Just let go

The most basic approach to attention is referred to as "objectless" – not focusing on any specific "scene" or aspect of experience, but just looking and marveling at the wide range of scenery as it comes and goes. During a recent trip to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, I'd often exercise by hiking through a tall, nearby hill that was covered in a jungle-like forest of plants and trees bearing various types of fruit. Halfway up the hill, I'd get tired, overwhelmed by the heat and humidity, the altitude, and the sheer variety of foliage. But at certain places, there would be a wooden chair or bench. I'd sit in the chair and just rest, simply aware of my physical fatigue and my surroundings.

You don't have to hike through the hills of Rio de Janeiro to accomplish this scene of open relaxation and awareness. You can experience it after washing a big pile of dishes. When you've finished washing the dishes, you can sit down in a chair with a big sigh, "Ahh." Your physical body may be tired, but your mind is at peace, totally open, totally at rest, and immersed in the present moment of "Ahh." Maybe your children are making noise in another room or maybe you're watching TV

– with all the changes in scenes and commercial interruptions. But neither disturbs your sense of "Ahh." Thoughts, feelings, and sensations may come and go, but you just observe them. You pay light and gentle – or what we in the Buddhist tradition refer to as "bare" – attention to them, as you rest with an "Ahh," simply open to the present moment. The past (washing dishes or climbing through a South American jungle) is over, and the future (more dishes, more jungles, bills to pay, or children to discipline) has yet to come. Right here, right now there is only the present "Ahh."

That's how to rest the mind in objectless attention: as though you've just finished a large, long, or difficult task. Just let go and relax. You don't have to block any thoughts, emotions, or sensations that arise, but neither do you have to chase them. Rest in the present moment of "Ahh." If thoughts, emotions, or sensations arise, simply allow yourself to be aware of them.

Objectless attention doesn't mean just letting your mind wander aimlessly among fantasies, memories, or daydreams. You may not be fixating on anything in particular, but you're still aware, still present to what's happening in the here and now.

When we practice on the level of objectless attention, we're actually resting the mind in its natural clarity, unaltered by the passage of thoughts, emotions, and physical sensations. This natural clarity is always present for us in the same way that space is always present.

In a sense, objectless attention is like allowing ourselves to be aware of the branches and leaves in front of us while recognizing the space that allows us to see the branches and leaves in the first place. Thoughts, emotions, and sensations shift and quiver in awareness in the same way branches and leaves shift and quiver in space. Moreover, just as space isn't defined by the objects that move through it, awareness isn't defined or limited by the thoughts, emotions, and sensations it apprehends. Awareness simply is.

Objectless attention involves settling into this "is-ness," simply watching thoughts, emotions, appearances, and so on, as they emerge against or within the background of "space." Some people

find the practice as easy as sitting in a chair after washing dishes; others find it rather difficult. I did.

Whenever my father or other teachers tried to explain objectless attention, I was mystified and a little bit resentful. I couldn't understand how it is possible to just watch whatever was going on as if it were a movie, or, as the many Buddhist texts say, a "reflection of the moon in a puddle." In moments of greatest anxiety, my thoughts, feelings, and physical sensations didn't seem like reflections. They seemed terribly, solidly real. Fortunately, there are other steps we can take in order to guide us through the process of simply being aware.

Resting on our senses

As a consequence of being embodied beings, much of our experience is filtered through one or another of the five senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. But since the five sense faculties – or sense consciousnesses, as most Buddhist texts refer to them – can only register sensory perceptions, Buddhist science describes a sixth sense, known as mental consciousness. This sixth sense – or sixth consciousness – shouldn't be confused with ESP, an ability to see into the future, or any other mysterious capability. It is more akin to what neuroscientists describe as the capacity to organize the information received through the senses and form a concept or mental image.

Mental consciousness is like the restless bird described earlier – flying from branch to branch, taking in the view, so to speak, from each branch. It tries to make sense of the information it receives and is impelled to respond. But it's possible to teach the bird to settle for a while by deliberately focusing its attention on one or another of the senses.

How?

In the course of ordinary experience, the mind already tends to fixate on sensory information. However, the information we receive through our senses is more often than not a source of distraction. Inasmuch as we're embodied beings,

we would inevitably experience a sense of futility if we attempted to disengage completely from our senses or block the information we receive through them. The more practical approach is to make friends with this information and utilize it as a means of calming the mind.

As I was taught, this friendship is most easily established by focusing on the visual aspects of an object – for example, a rose. What we think or feel about it doesn't matter: "good rose," "bad rose," "I-don't-know rose." If we just look at it as it is, we can begin to separate our opinions from the simple experience of seeing. Our opinions aren't in themselves good or bad or confused. But when we collapse them together with an object, our minds become distracted. We start to wonder, "Is this a good rose or a bad rose? When was the last time I saw a rose?" The restless bird flies from branch to branch trying to "understand" the rose. Yet the rose itself is not to be understood, but merely seen.

The technical term for using the sense of sight as a means of resting the mind is "form meditation." Sounds a bit scary, doesn't it? Very strict and precise. Actually, form meditation is quite simple.

Whatever object you choose to look at – a rose, a TV screen, or the person ahead of you in the grocery store checkout line – you'll probably notice that it has two aspects: shape and color. Focus on whichever aspect you prefer. The focus itself doesn't matter: some people are more drawn to shapes, and others to colors. The idea is simply to rest your attention on either its color or its shape, engaging awareness only to the point of barely recognizing shape or color.

It's not necessary to try to focus so intently that you take in every little detail. If you try to do that, you'll tense up, whereas the point of form meditation is to rest. Keep your focus loose, with just enough attention to hold a bare awareness toward whatever you're looking at. The visual object serves only as a reference point which allows your mind to settle, a cue for the little bird to stop fluttering from branch to branch – at least momentarily – and simply rest.

How to practise

First, depending on your circumstances, assume whatever physical posture is most convenient or comfortable. Next, allow your mind to rest for a moment in objectless attention. Just observe all the thoughts, sensations, and so on, that come up. Then choose something to look at – the color of someone's hair, the shape of his or her haircut, or a rose, a peach, or your desktop – and just rest your attention on it, noticing its shape or color.

You don't have to stare and if you need to blink, just blink. After a few moments of looking at someone or something, let your mind simply relax again in objectless attention. Return your focus to the object for a few moments; then allow your mind to relax once more.

Whenever I practice using a visual object as a support for resting the mind, I'm reminded of one of the earliest lessons I learned from my father. There is great benefit to be gained from alternating between object-based attention and

the sort of objectless attention described earlier. When you rest your mind on an object, you're seeing it as something distinct or separate from yourself. But when we let go and simply rest our minds in bare attention, gradually we begin to realize whatever we see, and however we see it, is an image made up of thoughts, memories, and the limitations conditioned by our sensory organs. In other words, there's no difference between what is seen and the mind that sees it.



回歸本然的一 道門

文字 鄭瑜麟 翻譯自英文版本 戴林焱

烹茶之道，用以雙膝。

關於日本茶道的描述已經非常多了：其深受佛教禪宗的影響，跨越了僧侶、武士和其他社會階層的歷史；其著重在謙卑、著重在季節的變換及其他方面的思想文化；乃至通過烹製一盞綠茶而使人開悟的可能性。

但關於膝部的傷痛則很少被談及。茶道的大部分流程是在正座中完成的，這種姿勢是大腿折於小腿之上，腳面貼在地面上。全身重量都壓在這一姿勢上，稱之為「正規的坐姿」。

十五分鐘以後，腳部的血液迴圈不暢通，使得雙膝開始刺痛，「不正規的坐姿」此時就顯得極具吸引力。

在京都茶館學習了五個月的課程之中，我有很多機會可以因為憐惜膝蓋而放棄。然而，隨即我卻報名參加了更多的課程。原因是，當練習烹茶的時候，我想著的只是烹茶。

日本的傳統房間由榻榻米地板和拉闔門構成，茶道通常是在這一空間中進行。大多數初學者從如何在這新環境中活動學起，重新學習最基本的行、坐、開關門等。簡言之，你回到了蹣跚學步的年代。

該如何完成每一個動作，事前都經過極細密的考量。任何細節都需要仔細編排。當進入房間的時候，要用右腳跨過門檻；離開的時候，左腳先跨出第一步。如果未能提前幾步計畫好步伐，就意味著你莊嚴的離場將會被在門口突然的倒腳而攪亂。

有趣的是，執行嚴謹的行動按規定環環相扣，這種困難會讓你放慢動作，並開始注意那些平常會忽視的每一個細節。

茶使我明白，我與我的生活日行漸遠。那些保持我活著的基本行為，比如飲食、呼吸、清洗，及其它無需動腦筋亦無休止的任務等，都已成為日常的常規行為，我們或躲避、或推延、或敷衍。

因為熟悉，我們麻木了。所以我繼續學習茶道，因為它賦予回歸本然的一道門。當然還有許多其他方法，例如書法、武術、攀岩和靜心，這些都有價值，但茶道有一個絕對優勢：就是保證可以享受到茶水及蛋糕。

經過近五個月的課程，我覺得至少知道如何開門。但是在一節課結束後，當我開門時，老師說我的手放得太低了。「手的位置應高於地面 24 釐米，」她說道。

她一定是看到了我的臉，猜到了我心中所問，「24 釐米……？」因為她補充道：「嗯，不需要完全精確到 24 釐米，但……」

手的高度是否要離地面 24 釐米，或者 23.4 釐米也可以接受，這都不是問題。它是一個提醒，告訴我任何新鮮的事物很快就變成習慣，接著就很容易被忽視忘記。

從茶室到其他任何房間，無論何種類型的門在我面前，我都會想起：先看雙手該擺放的位置，然後用眼睛測量出 24 釐米，再從容不迫地伸出我的手。

A DOORWAY INTO THE ORDINARY

Text Janice Tay

This is how you make a bowl of tea: you do it with your knees.

Much has been written about the Japanese tea ceremony. Its history blends influences from Zen Buddhism and a gradual branching out from monks and samurai to other levels of society. Its principles teach us humility; its artistic nuances take in the changing seasons and many other aspects of life. At its heart?: the possibility of approaching enlightenment through the humble act of whisking up a bowl of green tea for another person.

Much less has been said about the knee injuries. Most of the procedures in *chado* or *chanoyu* – as the tea ceremony is known – are done with your legs folded under your thighs and the tops of your feet splayed out on the ground. You put your entire weight on this structure, a position called *seiza*, or "proper sitting".

After 15 minutes of this, with circulation to your feet cut off and pain stabbing into your knees, improper sitting begins to look wildly attractive.

Yet after five months of classes in a Kyoto tea room and more than one chance to quit for the sake of my knees, I have signed up for more lessons. That is because, when I practise the tea ceremony, I can think of nothing but the tea ceremony.

With *chanoyu* usually conducted in a traditional Japanese room – a space of tatami floors and *fusuma* doors – most beginners start by studying how to move in this new environment: relearning the basics of walking, sitting, and opening and closing the door.

You are, in short, demoted back to toddlerhood.

An almost inconceivable amount of thought has gone into determining how each movement should be carried out. Nothing is too small for choreography. When entering the tea room, you cross the threshold with your right foot; when you leave, the left foot takes the first step out. Failure to plan for this a few steps in advance means that your dignified exit will be marred by a sudden quickstep at the door.

The difficulty of executing one intensely prescribed motion after another makes you slow down and pay attention to everything that you would otherwise sleepwalk through.

Tea has shown me how distant I have grown from my life. The basic acts needed to keep myself alive – eating, breathing, cleaning and all the other mindless, endless tasks – have become routine, something to be escaped, put off or hurried through.

Familiarity breeds concussion. And so I continue with the tea ceremony because it offers a way back into the ordinary. There are many other paths, of course – calligraphy, martial arts, rock climbing, meditation. But worthy as all those are, *chado* has one advantage: it comes with a guarantee of tea and cake.

After almost five months of lessons, I thought I knew at least how to open the door. But at the end of one class, Sensei pointed out that my hand was too low when I slid the *fusuma* aside. "It should be 24cm above the ground," she said.

She must have seen my face and the bubble over my head that said, "Twenty-four centimetres...?", because she added, "Well, it doesn't have to be 24cm exactly, but..."

Whether the hand has to be 24cm above the floor, or 23.4cm is also acceptable, doesn't seem like the point, though. The value here is the endlessly useful reminder about how quickly the unfamiliar can become routine – and get overlooked.

I am reminded once again to take the tea room into all the other rooms I know. No matter what kind of door is in front of me, I look first for where the hand must go and, measuring out 24cm with my eye, take deliberate hold.

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